

In this regard, the base clipping circuits 203a and 203b of Chubachi are not a filter but thresholding devices that pass an input if it exceeds the threshold. Chubachi discloses that the base clipping circuit 203a removes a component (which is most likely the noise) equal to or less than the threshold value T_a from the output of the ABS circuit 202 and outputs the rest to the integrator 204a, and that the base clipping circuit 203b removes a component equal to or less than circuit 202 and outputs the rest to the integrator 204b, in column 7, lines 9-16.

In contrast, a filter changes the frequency component of an input signal. A thresholding device passes or rejects the input solely on the basis of input amplitude. Thus, a filter and a base clipping circuit are functionally different, and the base clipping circuits of Chubachi cannot reasonably be equated with the claimed filter devices.

Chubachi also fails to disclose the evaluation calculation device and the determination device recited in claim 1 because Chubachi does not teach to consider the degree of change of the integrating values of the signals from the first filter device and the second filter device, or that a focus match decision is made based on the degree of change.

In this regard, Chubachi merely teaches to make a focus match decision based on the maximum values of integrators 204a and 204b. See Chubachi at col. 7, lines 21-46.

Thus, for at least these reasons, claims 1 is patentable over the applied reference. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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